In a math class I've noticed that graded assessments and other assignments that demonstrate student learning are more frequent than in other classes. I assign homework almost every night. When homework is collected it is graded by me or students self-grade their homework. I used to use a red pen and subtracted points off. So if they got something wrong, there would be an X and minus however many points the problem was worth.

To find new and better ways to grade assignments I talked with my mentor and and other members of the math department. I also read the article Feedback and Homework by Sharon Longert. From my readings and conversations, I learned new techniques on how to write feedback in a more positive manner. From talking with colleagues, I learned that grading should be in the positive and not a loss of points. From talking with my mentor, I learned using different color ink to grade assignments makes a difference to students. I also learned to be more elaborate in my feedback. In order to do this I've been taking an extra day to hand back assignments so the feedback I offer has more value.

From reading the article stated above, I learned when students are learning basic facts, students need immediate feedback. My students need to know if the answer is right or wrong in that moment. When giving feedback I learned that it is important to offer suggestions that are doable and to consider the child's age and developmental level when writing feedback. I also learned to think more about the tone of my voice and my writing voice to make sure my students feel in charge and not like I am criticizing them for being wrong.

I learned from talking with my mentor to explain assessment criteria in more detail. On assessments the point values and directions to show work have always been visible but not broken into parts.

Based upon my conversations with my mentor and colleagues one way I changed my practice is to no longer use a red pen to correct papers. My concern was that students often interpret red pen as negative. If there are a lot of red pen markings on an assignment, they may feel overwhelmed and/or to upset to read any of the valuable feedback. Now I use different colored pens such as pink, green, or purple and I make much more of an effort to include positive comments on all papers in addition any specific feedback. The color is friendlier and they seem to actually read the comments, think about any questions posed and follow any corrections offered.

Another change I made is using a check mark or a plus sign instead of an X or a minus sign. My hope is that it will have a positive effect. Some students have told me they feel good about seeing a plus sign or a check mark instead of a big red X. By highlighting the positives and not just what is wrong on assignments, I think it allows students to feel better about their work. My hope is that overtime it will help increase students desire to strengthen their skills and become more confident in their math ability.

Since talking with my mentor about assessment criteria I now take anywhere from five to ten minutes before assessments to explain the grade break down of each problem. I now tell my students exactly what I am looking for on each question and how it will be broken up. For example, if a problem on an assessment says it is worth five points, I would break the point value of the question. So my students know that showing work is two points out of the five points.

When grading assessments I used to subtract and take off points so students only saw the points they lost. I changed the way I grade assessments to make it more positive. Now that I use a plus sign for answers that are either correct or partially correct, I am adding points instead of subtracting points. I feel the grading allows a student to see what they earned and not what they lost. At the bottom of each page I put the total points the student earned on that page. My thought was that students should be earning points on assessments and not losing points.

Another one of my goals, when grading assignments is to make sure I am providing positive and detailed feedback. Some feedback may include asking questions such as "How could you make this more specific?" or "What else could you have said about blank?" Other types of questions I may ask are "What are you noticing about this work?" or "Why did you decide to do it this way?" I now try to avoid fixing the problem for them and offer a roadmap that addresses the weaknesses and how fix it in the future. By giving this type of feedback it allows my students to think critically. When a student can understand their mistake and not just see the marking on how to correct the mistake, they may be less likely to make that mistake in the future.

I have been able to show my students how to think about the smaller steps in the process so the student can eventually self-correct. I now use feedback to show the student the progress they have made and what steps are necessary for reaching the next goal.

I learned to visit each group during class and look at their process and communicate whether or not they are on the right track. I also learned that once in a while I should post a list of answers on the board for students to verify if they were correct when they work together.

Student reactions to the change in marking papers with points gained rather than lost created a little positive "buzz" in their communications. It has prompted my students to look for where they lost points and figure out their mistakes. My student's attitudes have been more positive and less fearful when they receive their grades on assessments.

As a result of changing the way I give feedback on assignments, I have seen improvement on all assignments. Students are actually looking back and referencing feedback given on older assignments and applying it to current assignments and homework. I noticed that students are voluntarily trying the

question again applying thought around the feedback given. They better understand the mistakes previously made and now know better how to fix it for the future assignments.

Students have shown me from reading their feedback, they are now able self-correct their own mistakes. More students are double checking and going over their work before turning it in resulting in a higher class average. Students are showing me that they are capable of making less of their previous mistakes.

Since using the google app Pear Deck in my classroom I am able to provide instant feedback to my students. It allows me to see what students understand and where they could be or are making mistakes. Students have verbally stated they like seeing where they compare to the rest of the class as well appreciate the instant feedback. When I notice a student incorporates previously learned strategies into present work I give them praise verbally and it shows on assignments with an improved grade. My students have also stated that they like using technology as a source of receiving feedback.

Since explaining the assessment criteria before assessments, my students' academic performance has been much better. For example, students are not losing points for not filling out a table when graphing because they know that filling out a table is worth a point on the assessment. They have been reading directions more and taking their time to make sure they show all their work.

Some of my students have applied the process of thinking in smaller steps to their work for self-correcting. I have students who ask me a question, while I'm helping another student. By the time I visit their group, it is nice to see that they have figured it out for themselves.

Posting answers during partner or group class activities has also met with positive student reactions and student reviews. In addition, this new practice has better allowed me to circulate to all the groups better within the allotted class time. It has also freed up my time with each group so that there is more time spent on asking thought provoking questions rather than answering "is this right?" Students are now able check their answers against the posted answers. If they made a mistake, they can now look to see where the mistake was made to self-correct their work. My students are now applying the methods I have modeled for them.

Overall, I have seen an improvement in myself when grading assessments and my students' ability to accept feedback. I have seen an improvement in my students. They are now more informed on how to improve their performance. Studying this module has been particularly useful to me as a teacher and has helped me to learn and develop in giving students more descriptive, individualized, and useful feedback. In turn, my students have become better learners and helped build their mathematical confidence.